



Michigan NETS Winter Driving Safety Tips



Winter driving season has arrived. It's amazing how many motorists have forgotten their winter driving skills during the short summer months. The fact is many crashes occur when motorists do not anticipate the road surface conditions.

Many people get into trouble by assuming the roads will not be slippery unless the temperature is freezing or below. Ice can form on road surfaces any time the air temperature drops to 40° degrees or less and especially in windy conditions. Bridges and underpasses can be especially hazardous, as the ability of moisture to dissipate from the roadway is different, along with varying surface angles. Low or shaded areas and areas surrounded by landscaping can also contribute too less than ideal road condition issues.

Intersections are also areas that although appear to be clear or only slightly wet are often ice-covered and slippery. This is caused by moisture emitting from the exhaust of cars waiting at the intersection, which then quickly freezes on the pavement. It is also recommended that motorists allow no less than a car-length in front of their vehicle when stopped behind other vehicles at intersections. They should also watch their rear-view mirrors for cars approaching too fast from behind. Often this extra margin of safety will allow drivers to pull forward in the event that an approaching vehicle begins to slide.

DRIVING TIPS

Skids occur as a result of braking or accelerating too hard or traveling too fast for conditions. Regardless of how it began, each should be handled in a similar fashion. The first thing to do is to remain calm, **DON'T PANIC!**



A. Braking on ice and snow.

NO-ABS: The most efficient technique for braking under these conditions is to use threshold braking. This technique includes keeping your heel on the floor between the brake and the accelerator. Use your toes to press the brake to the point of the brakes locking up. Ease off the brake to the "threshold" where the brakes stop locking up.

ABS: if the vehicle has anti-lock brakes (ABS), keep steady constant pressure on the brake pedal at all times. You may feel a slight vibration, which is normal. Don't "pump" the brakes. Just hold the pedal down. Letting up on the brake pedal will deactivate ABS and keep it from working for you.

B. Understanding the natural laws that affect the control of your vehicle can help you regain that control when you lose it through skidding.

Skidding is loss of control over the direction your vehicle is moving because of reduced traction. If you skid, you are not helpless.

Remembering to follow these simple guidelines can help you manage the risk of a skid:

- Ease your foot off the accelerator or brake.
- Avoid stepping on the brake.
- De-clutch, on a vehicle with a manual transmission.
- Look and steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go.
- Make necessary steering adjustments smoothly and progressively.
- If you over-correct the first skid, be prepared for a skid in the other direction. Again, remember to look in the direction you want the vehicle to go.
- Continue to steer until your vehicle recovers from the skid.
- Once the vehicle is under control again, adjust your speed to the

- road conditions.
- Four-wheel-drive enthusiasts are reminded that although a four-wheel drive vehicle provides some additional traction in non-ideal weather conditions, drivers of these vehicles should take the same precautions as if they were driving in a non-four-wheel vehicle.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Just as important as good driving skills, however, is preventative vehicle maintenance. Motorists need to make sure their vehicle is in good mechanical condition as weather conditions can cause unwanted vehicle issues.

- Make sure antifreeze is at the proper level
- Install new wiper blades and fill the washer reservoir
- Keep an extra bottle of washer solvent in the vehicle
- Make sure your battery terminals are clean and if the battery is more than three year's old, have it tested by a qualified technician
- Check your tire treads. Don't assume your tires will make it another winter. Here's a good tip, take a penny and stick it into the tread (head first), if you can see Lincoln's head, it's time to invest in new tires. You should also check your tires air pressure monthly using an accurate pressure gauge. The correct PSI for your tires is located on your vehicle's tire information label, usually found on the technical information sheet located on the inside of your driver's side door. You must open the door to view this information. Or look in your owner's manual. At the very least, get your tires checked at a reputable tire dealer.



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Unexpected events can and do happen. By having an emergency kit prepared ahead of time and in your vehicle, you can increase your chances of arriving at your destination safely. Items in your emergency kit should include but are not limited to:

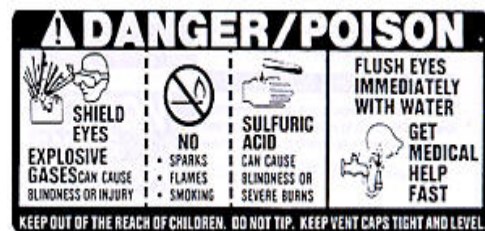
- Warm clothing, boots, stocking cap, gloves or mittens
- Flashlight with fresh batteries and flares
- Small shovel, sand or kitty litter
- Blankets
- Fresh first-aid supplies
- Drinking water, candy bars or other nutritious snacks
- Small candles and matches to light them with. A single lit candle can provide warmth for four hours.
- A charged cell phone or other communication device



Frozen car locks can also be a real safety issue. Carefully heating the end of a key with a match or a lighter will work most of the time. A squirt of de-icer spray that you can purchase at most gas stations and store it in your glove box is another quick method.

HOW DO I JUMP START MY BATTERY?

- **Safety Tips**
 - Batteries contain explosive gases. Don't strike a light while jumpstarting a car and don't try to jumpstart a damaged battery. Do not jumpstart a battery that is frozen.
 - Batteries contain sulfuric acid. If any gets on your skin or in your eyes, flush with water and get medical help immediately. We recommend that you wear eye protection, such as ANSI* approved safety glasses or goggles or a face shield.
 - Never lean over the battery when making a connection or disconnection.



- **Before you begin, you'll need...**

- A set of jumper cables
- A vehicle with a good battery that is the same voltage as yours
- To know the difference between the negative and positive battery terminals and the negative and positive clamps of the jumper cables. Positive is indicated by a (+) sign, the words "POS" and the color red; negative is marked by a (-) sign, the words "NEG" and the color black. The colors may vary but are red (+) and black (-) in most instances.

➤ **Jumpstarting**

- Pull the cars next to each so they're not touching and turn off both ignitions.
- Connect the positive clamp of the jumper cable to the dead battery's positive terminal.
- Connect the other positive clamp of the cable to the positive terminal of the battery in the starting vehicle.
- Connect the negative clamp of the cable to the negative terminal of the battery in the starting vehicle.
- Connect the other negative clamp of the cable to the vehicle's engine block, or other metal surface of the car--away from the battery. This metal surface is exclusive of the carburetor or tubing on the car with the discharged battery. This serves as your ground or connection point.
- Make certain all cables are clear of fan blades, belts and other moving parts of both engines and that everyone is standing away from the vehicles. Start the car of the battery providing the jump start; then try to start the car with the dead battery.
- If the car starts, allow the engine to return to idle speed, then remove the cables in the reverse order that you put them on.
- Remove the negative clamp on the ground of the car that needed the jump
- Remove the negative clamp on the assisting vehicle
- Remove the positive clamp from the assisting vehicle
- Remove the positive clamp from the formerly stalled vehicle
- If the car doesn't start, wait a few moments and try again. If it still doesn't start, you probably need a new battery.

* ANSI – American National Standards Institute

Other basic safety tips for winter driving include:

- Allow extra time to arrive at your destination.
- Slow down and be alert for other vehicles around you.
- Allow extra space between you and other vehicles.
- Always wear your safety belt and ensure others in your vehicle are properly restrained.
- If you drink, do so responsibly and always hand the keys over to a designated driver. Even one drink can impair your driving.
- During inclement weather, make sure to let others know your route of travel, and expected arrival time.
- Cell phones are a great safety insurance against breakdowns and getting stranded.
- Stay alert and on longer trips ensure you take needed breaks.
- Watch for road signs, landmarks and construction zones.
- Never start a vehicle in a closed garage or idle your engine with the windows closed. Carbon monoxide, which is present in exhaust fumes, is almost impossible to detect and can be fatal.

